

REMARKS

Claims 5-15 are currently pending in the application.

The above amendments are being made to place the application in condition for allowance.

The information disclosure statement filed January 16, 2006 failed to comply with 37 CFR 1.98(a)(2), which requires a legible copy of each cited foreign patent document.

Applicant has submitted legible copies of these documents for consideration on a supplemental Information Disclosure Statement.

Claims 5-15 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. 112, second paragraph, as being indefinite.

Applicant has substituted language from specification paragraph [0024] to clarify in the claims that the suction connector has a shape which does not substantially project relative to its peripheral edge on a side of the suction connector facing outside the tightly closed bag.

In claims 13-15 the limitation "the concavity" has been amended to a more accurate term of "annular cavity" and corrected for antecedent basis.

Accordingly, withdrawal of the rejection is respectfully requested

Reconsideration of the rejection of claims 5-8, 13, and 14 under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over US 5,332,095 to Wu in view of US 6,604,634 to Su, is respectfully requested.

Claim 5 is directed to a valve mechanism to be attached to a tightly closed bag for holding its contents by keeping the contents from the ambient air and adapted to open for

evacuating air from the tightly closed bag and close for stopping such evacuation, the valve mechanism comprising:

a suction connector mounted at a peripheral edge thereof on an outer surface of a tightly closed bag within a hole formed therein, the *suction connector having a vent formed in its center and having a shape which does not substantially project relative to its peripheral edge on a side of the suction connector facing outside the tightly closed bag;*

a valve base mounted on the inner surface of the tightly closed bag and having a recessed shape in cross-section, a suction opening formed in its center as viewed in top plan, and an edge portion adapted to be joined to the suction connector with the tightly closed bag held therebetween; and

a valve body facing the suction opening within the valve base and adapted to open the suction opening upon suction through the vent and close it upon stoppage of the suction.

Wu is relied upon for a valve mechanism, having a suction connector (64) at bag opening (231), a hole (63) formed in the connector, a vent formed in its center (63), a valve base (3) having a suction opening (32) mounted on the inner surface of the bag, the bag being held between the connector and the base, and a valve body (41) facing the suction opening within the valve base.

Wu lacks a suction connector (64) with a shape which does not substantially project relative to its peripheral edge on a side of the suction connector facing outside the tightly closed bag. Wu also lacks a valve base having a recessed cross section.

Su is relied upon for showing a recessed shaped lower seat (1), having ridges (12), and a ring member (7) in a concavity in the cap member or equivalent connector (3), for sealing the vent.

Assuming one were compelled to combine the teachings of Su with the device of Wu, the claimed invention would not be rendered obvious. This is because both of the elements (3), (64) which can be considered to be connectors in Su and Wu respectively, project substantially relative to their edges. In Su, the cap (3) has projections (36). In Wu, the connector (64) is part of a cover (6) having an annular flange (65) and a flat plate (64) *spaced apart from*, i.e. projecting from the flange (65). See Wu, col. 4, lines 42-53.

Furthermore, the ring (7) of Su is not disclosed to be elastic, and the ring is disposed between the equivalent connector (3) and a valve cover (6), not between the connector and the equivalent valve base (1), as required by dependent claims 6-8, and 13-14.

Neither Wu nor Su taken alone or combined disclose or suggest that the suction connector has a shape which does not substantially project relative to its peripheral edge on a side of the suction connector facing outside the tightly closed bag. Accordingly, the invention is not obvious over Wu in view of Su under 35 U.S.C 103 and withdrawal of the rejection is respectfully requested.

Reconsideration of the rejection of claims 9-12 and 15 under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Wu in view of Su and further in view of US 6,712,334 to Motonaka et al, is respectfully requested.

Wu in view of Su is relied upon for disclosing the recited elements of claims 5-8 and 13-14, as above.

Wu in view of Su fails to disclose that the suction connector further comprises load restraining means provided around its vent for restraining the load of the suction device used for discharging air from the tightly closed bag.

Motonaka et al is relied upon for the use of a sponge material (30) provided around the air intake (13) on a movable piece 2a, which is considered to be a load restraining means.

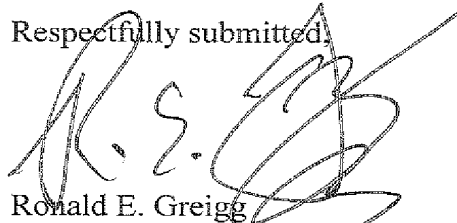
Although the motivation to combine Motonaka et al with Wu and Su may be proper, the addition of Motonaka et al to the primary references does not make up for their shortcomings. None of the applied references taken alone or combined disclose or suggest the combination and the arrangement of a suction connector having a shape which does not substantially project relative to its peripheral edge on a side of the suction connector facing outside the tightly closed bag, and a valve base having a recessed shape in cross-section, a suction opening, and an edge portion adapted to be joined to the suction connector with the tightly closed bag held therebetween, and a valve body facing the suction.

Accordingly, withdrawal of all of the rejections under 35 U.S.C 103 is respectfully requested, since the rejections of the dependent claims are based upon the above first rejection, which Applicant believes to be made moot in view of the presented remarks.

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Entry of the amendment is respectfully solicited.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'R. E. Greigg', with a large, sweeping flourish extending from the end of the signature.

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